

Preface

FEBS Letters Budapest issue

Every one-and-a-half decades there is a FEBS Meeting organized in Budapest, Hungary. The present meeting, in July 2005, is also an IUBMB congress, and the scientific program is topical: The World of Proteins. This FEBS Letters issue is dedicated to this conference, it presents a bunch of flowers from the motley field of proteins. I hope the selection will prove both novel and attractive from the scientific point of view.

Before canvassing the future, the senior contributors to this issue cannot help looking into the past. The first FEBS meeting held in Budapest (1974) was already the 9th FEBS meeting. I was heavily involved in organizing the scientific program. My goodness, more than 30 years ago! Everything has changed since then, not only science. Our whole frame of life has fundamentally altered. Corresponding via surface mail, mechanic typewriters, carbon copies, figures drawn in ink and photographed for slides, etc. Even to us, who used to live with them, they appear as extinct species from before the Deluge.

The second FEBS Meeting in Budapest (1990, the 20th) was organized with collapsing communism in the background. Fascinating times, though not very practical from a purely organizational point of view: promised support from state agencies evaporated along with the agencies. An outstanding example

was the Budapest Convention Center. This modern conference building had been planned to get enlarged substantially to house a major anniversary event of the Communist Party ("the" Party). We counted on that and all plenary lectures were to be held there. However, with the demise of communism building plans were dropped and we had to find emergency solutions. Why the Hungarian Biochemical Society did not go bankrupt then was mainly due to the unexpectedly large attendance: apparently biochemists were interested in historical happenings.

This time, in 2005, we have nothing spectacular to show (of course, the Danube embankment is there). Hungary is member of the EU, NATO, and is struggling with all difficulties emerging from the new bondage. But we may eventually focus on science. High time.

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